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CHARTING CROSS-BORDER CO-OPERATION IN THE CHANNEL / LA MANCHE REGION: SUCCESSES AND FAILURES

INTRODUCTION

Since the 1990s, the foreign policy of sub-national government has been increasingly recognized. Often referred to as ‘paradiplomacy’¹, these activities challenge the traditional perception that foreign policy is the sole preserve of nation states. This is particularly the case in Europe, where the multi-level nature of the European Union (EU) is seen to facilitate the active engagement of sub-national actors beyond their local boundaries. Cross-border co-operation represents one form of this paradiplomacy. While commonly regarded as a phenomenon developing from the mid-1980s, sub-national governments’ engagement beyond their administrative borders, and in particular cross-border co-operation, has a long tradition. Early examples of cross-border co-operation include various initiatives in the Upper Rhine Valley area². However, cross-border co-operation is now a feature of contemporary European governance and can be observed in all EU border regions³.

Cross-border co-operation, and indeed wider transnational links between sub-national government, have been actively encouraged by the Council of Europe since the 1980s⁴, and the institution has adopted a number of declarations supporting the activity⁵. However, due to the nature of this activity, which crosses national borders, sub-national authorities engaging in cross-border co-operation face a number of legal and administrative barriers; what the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière describes as an inherent ‘frontier effect’⁶. Indeed, early co-operation initiatives operated outside of legal frameworks and usually lacked

¹ Francisco Aldecoa and Michael Keating (eds.), *Paradiplomacy in Action: The Field Relations of Subnational Governments* (Frank Cass, 1999).

² Niles Hansen, ‘Regional Transboundary Cooperation Efforts in Centralist States: Conflicts and Responses in France and Mexico’, *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, 14, 1984. Susan J Koch, ‘Toward a Europe of Regions: Transnational Political Activities in Alsace’, *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, 4, 1974.

³ Markus Perkmann, ‘Building Governance Institutions Across European Borders’, *Regional Studies*, 33, 1999. Markus Perkmann, ‘Cross-Border Regions in Europe: Significance and Drivers of Regional Cross-Border Co-Operation’, *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 10, 2003. For a fuller account of the development of cross-border co-operation in Europe Birte Wassenberg, Bernard Reitel and Jean Peyrony, *Territorial Cooperation in Europe: A Historical Perspective* (Publications Office of the European Union, 2015).

⁴ Alexander Murphy, ‘Emerging Regional Linkages within the European Community: Challenging the Dominance of the State’, *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 84, 1993, p. 111. Kepa Sodupe, ‘The European Union and Inter-Regional Co-Operation’, in Francisco Aldecoa and Michael Keating (eds.), *Paradiplomacy in Action: The Field Relations of Subnational Governments* (Frank Cass, 1999), p. 63.

⁵ Council of Europe, *European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-Operation Between Territorial Communities or Authorities* (1980), available online at: <<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/106.htm>>. Council of Europe, *Additional Protocol to the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-Operation Between Territorial Communities or Authorities* (1995), available online at: <<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/159.htm>>. Council of Europe, *Protocol No. 2 to the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-Operation Between Territorial Communities or Authorities Concerning Interterritorial Co-Operation* (1998), available online at <<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/169.htm>>.

⁶ Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière and Council of Europe, *Practical Guide to Transfrontier Co-Operation* (2006), available online at: <http://certess.culture-routes.lu/system/files/work/tef_practical_guide_en.pdf>.

formal recognition⁷. Nevertheless, to underline its importance in the processes of European integration and governance, in 2006 cross-border co-operation was given a legal basis following the EU's adoption of the European Grouping of Territorial Co-operation (EGTC) instrument.

This chapter discusses one such case of cross-border co-operation: the English Channel region (*'la Manche'* in French). It charts the development of cross-border co-operation in this area and investigates attempts to build a form of cross-border governance in a region characterized by fundamental differences across national boundaries. Because of these differences, and the development of cross-border co-operation despite them, this region represents an interesting case. This chapter shows that cross-border co-operation has flourished where sub-national authorities have been able to capitalize on opportunities to address functional policy challenges. However, there are limits. The development of cross-border co-operation has been far from smooth, and prospects for collaboration are small when policy issues become embroiled in 'high politics' at the national level.

The chapter starts by briefly discussing the English Channel region and the inherent challenges faced by sub-national authorities seeking to co-operate across this national and geographical frontier. It then charts the development of cross-border co-operation in this region during the 1990s before offering a reflection on the stability of this co-operation over time. Attention is then turned to two recent cases of cross-border co-operation as examples of an attempt to build cross-border governance. The case of migration is then highlighted as an illustration of the limits to cross-border co-operation.

The chapter concludes by highlighting three themes from the English Channel case: firstly cross-border co-operation as predominantly bottom-up venture, secondly it is functional and pragmatic response to perceived transnational policy challenges and opportunities, and thirdly cross-border co-operation can only succeed where there is scope of sub-national authorities to lead it themselves.

CHALLENGES TO CROSS-BORDER CO-OPERATION IN THE ENGLISH CHANNEL REGION

The completion of the Single European Market in the 1990s was heralded as a decline in the significance of national borders within the EU. Nevertheless, across the English Channel at least, very real barriers continued to exist. Unlike many other border regions in Europe, England and France do not share a land border. With 33 kilometres at its shortest distance between the two countries, the English Channel itself represents a fundamental geographical barrier, as well as a national one⁸. This, along with the non-adoption of the Schengen Agreement by the United Kingdom (UK) government, means cross-border travel is far from hassle free. Features which might be observed in some other European cross-border regions, such as cross-border commuting, are therefore significantly less prominent.

The construction of the Channel Tunnel in the early 1990s is often cited as evidence that the geographical element of the frontier has been overcome. Indeed Kent County Council and the Conseil Régional du Nord-Pas de Calais were able to argue that the tunnel constituted a land border and thus secured their eligibility in early Interreg funding programmes⁹. However, economic reality means regional transport links across the border have actually reduced since the tunnel's operation began, as competition between ferry companies and Eurostar and Eurotunnel have concentrated cross-border transport links between Dover and Calais¹⁰. Furthermore the tunnel and associated transport infrastructure has led to a 'corridor effect'; while economic benefits are felt in national capitals, the transport links bypass Kent and the Pas de Calais, increasing the economic peripherality of Channel coastal regions¹¹. At the regional level at least, the Channel Tunnel seems to have exacerbated the geographical barriers presented by the English

⁷ Enrico Ercole, Menno Walters and Michael Goldsmith, 'Cities, Networks, Euregions and European Offices', in Michael Goldsmith and Kurt K Klausen (eds.), *European Integration and Local Government* (Edward Elgar, 1997).

⁸ Odile Heddebaut, 'The Binational Cities of Dover and Calais and their Region', *GeoJournal*, 55, 2001, pp. 61–62.

⁹ Stephen Barber, 'International, Local and Regional Government Alliances', *Public Money and Management*, 17, 1997, p. 20.

Andrew Church and Peter Reid, 'Cross-Border Co-Operation, Institutionalization and Political Space across the English Channel', *Regional Studies*, 33, 1999, p. 646.

¹⁰ Odile Heddebaut, 'The Binational Cities of Dover and Calais and their Region', *GeoJournal*, 55, 2001, p. 61.

¹¹ Odile Heddebaut, 'The Binational Cities of Dover and Calais and their Region', *GeoJournal*, 55, 2001, p. 62. Matthew Sparke, '“Chunnel Visions”: Unpacking the Anticipatory Geographies of an Anglo-European Borderland', *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 15, 2000, p. 198. Roger Vickerman, 'Kent in the Euroregion: Are There New Trends in Economic Development?', *Hommes et Terres du Nord*, 3, 1998.

Channel and reaffirmed the status of the southern English and northern French coasts as peripheral border regions.

Challenges to co-operation are exacerbated by the fact that sub-national authorities on either side of the English Channel operate under different constitutional systems. While both English and French sub-national government operate in centralized and unitary systems, and are subject to the same broad processes involved in the shift from 'government' to 'governance' and Europeanization¹², a number of fundamental differences remain with their inter-governmental relations with the central state, policy competences, bureaucratic culture and of course language. As noted by Sparke, cross-border co-operation "developed in the context of a highly uneven and divided social, political, and economic geography, marked by a long history of disconnection and division ... Thus, the initial plans for cross-channel cooperation were made by very different areas with contrasting regional identities, policy-making environments, and economies"¹³.

Despite this challenging context, however, cross-border co-operation has taken place and indeed continues to this day. This chapter now summarizes how this developed through the 1990s.

BACKGROUND TO CROSS-BORDER CO-OPERATION IN THE CHANNEL: THE 1990S

Contemporary cross-border co-operation in the English Channel region has not occurred in isolation, but rather builds upon a number of civic town twinning links developed in the post-war period. Furthermore, despite the economic and geographic challenges outlined above, Buléon and Shurmer-Smith argue that the regions along the Channel coast have a sense of "shared history" which could be used as the basis for developing cross-border co-operation¹⁴.

Initial cross-border co-operation took the form of bilateral links between English county councils and French regional councils. Examples of these early links include those between Kent and Nord-Pas de Calais in 1987, between Hampshire and Basse-Normandie in 1989, and between East Sussex and Haute-Normandie in 1993. By the mid-1990s there were 11 such bilateral links in place between sub-national authorities on either side of the English Channel (see Figure 1)¹⁵. Such cases of co-operation went beyond the traditional civic and cultural nature of the traditional twinning links which had been developed earlier.

<FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE>

As the number of these bilateral links grew, a number of initiatives took place to deepen and institutionalize this emerging cross-border co-operation. In many cases partnership agreements and accords were signed between the partners, focusing co-operation in particular policy areas. Kent and Nord-Pas de Calais's agreement went further, establishing regular meetings and joint committees between the two authorities¹⁶.

Further intensification of cross-border co-operation took place following the creation of the Transmanche Euroregion. This built upon the early Kent–Nord-Pas de Calais link (although it did not replace it), and also saw the involvement of the Belgian regions of Brussels-Capital, Flanders and Wallonia. Again, institutionalization was taking place; there were formal meetings as well as a secretariat based in Brussels to manage the network and its activities, financed by membership fees paid by the authorities involved¹⁷. Another example of multilateral cross-border co-operation was the creation of the

¹² Alistair Cole and Peter John, *Local Governance in England and France*, (Routledge, 2001). Peter John, *Local Governance in Western Europe*, (Sage Publications, 2001).

¹³ Matthew Sparke, "'Chunnel Visions': Unpacking the Anticipatory Geographies of an Anglo–European Borderland", *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 15, 2000, p. 196.

¹⁴ Pascal Buléon and Louis Shurmer-Smith (eds.), *Espace Manche: Un Monde en Europe / Channel Spaces: A World Within Europe*, (Université de Caen Basse-Normandie, 2008).

¹⁵ Anne Poussard, *La Coopération Interrégionale dans la Zone Transmanche* (n.d.), available online at <<http://atlas-transmanche.certic.unicaen.fr/en/page-48.html>>. Anne Poussard, *Les Années 1980–90: L'Augmentation de Accords de Coopération Transmanche* (n.d.), available online at <<http://atlas-transmanche.certic.unicaen.fr/en/page-47.html>>.

¹⁶ Stephen Barber, 'International, Local and Regional Government Alliances', *Public Money and Management*, 17, 1997.

¹⁷ Stephen Barber, 'International, Local and Regional Government Alliances', *Public Money and Management*, 17, 1997. Andrew Church and Peter Reid, 'Transfrontier Co-Operation, Spatial Development Strategies and the Emergence of a New Scale of

Arc Manche network, led under the initiative of West Sussex and Haute Normandie. This was founded in 1996 and, covering all the upper-tier authorities along the Channel coast (although Cornwall and Devon only had 'observer' status), had a much wider geographical remit compared to the Transmanche Euroregion¹⁸. Cross-border co-operation in the English Channel was thus moving from a bilateral enterprise to a multilateral one, involving several partners.

The examples identified so far all refer to co-operation between 'upper-tier' sub-national authorities (those which represent the closest level of elected government next to the state). However, it is important to recognize that cross-border co-operation was also taking place at the urban level with the development of the Transmanche Metropole. This involved the local authorities of Caen, Le Havre and Rouen in France, and Southampton, Portsmouth, Bournemouth and Poole in England¹⁹.

The examples of the Transmanche Euroregion and the Arc Manche in particular illustrate how the initiatives of bilateral co-operation (between Kent and Nord-Pas de Calais and West Sussex and Haute Normandie respectively) evolved into wider multilateral cross-border co-operation. This trend led Church and Reid writing towards the end of the 1990s to speculate about the creation of a transnational institutionalized political space in the English Channel region²⁰. This leads to questions about the governance of the English Channel as a cross-border region and the stability of these arrangements; questions which will be explored further below.

Another significant development during the 1990s was the creation, and subsequent expansion, of the EU's Interreg programme, and in particular the 'A' strand dedicated to cross-border co-operation. This was initially focused between Kent and Nord-Pas de Calais, but the eligibility area gradually expanded to include the entirety of the English Channel. Interreg led to a range of shorter, time-limited cross-border co-operation initiatives in the form of transnational projects. The initial Interreg I programme between Kent and Nord-Pas de Calais, for example, led to 68 projects, most of which involved sub-national authorities on both sides of the English Channel²¹. Indeed, lobbying for Interreg eligibility was a key objective of many of the bilateral and multilateral cross-border networks developed during the 1990s.

While it is often assumed Interreg is the driving force behind cross-border co-operation in the English Channel region²², it is worth highlighting that many of the cross-border links outlined above are bottom-up ventures, and often pre-date eligibility under the Interreg programmes. The development of cross-border co-operation in the English Channel thus represents a mix of largely bottom-up initiatives by the sub-national authorities involved, while also partly facilitated by the top-down instruments of EU regional policy.

REFLECTING ON THE STABILITY OF CROSS-BORDER CO-OPERATION DURING THE 1990S AND 2000S

The above overview shows that cross-border co-operation in the English Channel region emerged from the late 1980s and continued to develop throughout the 1990s. This co-operation became increasingly institutionalized throughout this period as cross-border networks grew and developed administrative

Regulation: The Anglo-French Border', *Regional Studies*, 29, 1995. Andrew Church and Peter Reid, 'Urban Power, International Networks and Competition: The Example of Cross-Border Cooperation', *Urban Studies*, 33, 1996. Andrew Church and Peter Reid, 'Cross-Border Co-Operation, Institutionalization and Political Space across the English Channel', *Regional Studies*, 33, 1999. Peter Thomas, 'Images and Economic Development in the Cross-Channel Euroregion', *Geography*, 91, 2006.

¹⁸ Andrew Church and Peter Reid, 'Cross-Border Co-Operation, Institutionalization and Political Space across the English Channel', *Regional Studies*, 33, 1999. Peter Thomas, 'Images and Economic Development in the Cross-Channel Euroregion', *Geography*, 91, 2006.

¹⁹ Andrew Church and Peter Reid, 'Transfrontier Co-Operation, Spatial Development Strategies and the Emergence of a New Scale of Regulation: The Anglo-French Border', *Regional Studies*, 29, 1995, pp. 302-303.

²⁰ Andrew Church and Peter Reid, 'Cross-Border Co-Operation, Institutionalization and Political Space across the English Channel', *Regional Studies*, 33, 1999.

²¹ Stephen Barber, 'International, Local and Regional Government Alliances', *Public Money and Management*, 17, 1997, p. 21.

²² Andrew Church, *Cohesion, Competition and Contradiction: INTERREG and Franco-British Cross Border Co-Operation* (2007), available online at: <<http://recercat.net/bitstream/handle/2072/204066/Num.%2015.pdf?sequence=1>>. Andrew Church and Peter Reid, 'Transfrontier Co-Operation, Spatial Development Strategies and the Emergence of a New Scale of Regulation: The Anglo-French Border', *Regional Studies*, 29, 1995. Andrew Church and Peter Reid, 'Urban Power, International Networks and Competition: The Example of Cross-Border Cooperation', *Urban Studies*, 33, 1996. Nicholas Rees, 'Inter-Regional Cooperation in the EU and Beyond', *European Planning Studies*, 5, 1997.

structures to manage themselves. Eligibility in Interreg has also facilitated cross-border co-operation to some extent. However, a closer inspection reveals that throughout the 1990s and beyond, the ‘institutions’ of cross-border co-operation and the networks developed between sub-national authorities have not remained stable.

This point is illustrated by the fact that two of the examples outlined above did not exist (at least in their institutional form) far beyond the 1990s. Regarding the Transmanche Euroregion, this had been effectively dormant since 2003 as members gradually disengaged from the network, before being completely disbanded in 2004²³. Regarding the Transmanche Metropole, even during the 1990s Church and Reid identified that it had been operating “in a low key manner” since it was unable to secure eligibility under the Interreg II programme²⁴, and this network was also disbanded.

The Arc Manche network, however, best exemplifies the lack of institutional stability in cross-border co-operation the English Channel region. Following the establishment of the network in 1996, the partners’ engagement quickly died down. A renewed declaration was signed in 2003²⁵, but co-operation became less active again. Indeed, as an indicator of this much of the Arc Manche’s website has not been updated since 2010²⁶. Nevertheless there appears to be a renewed interest in collaboration. During 2012 and 2013, just as as the 2014–2020 EU regional policy programmes were being developed, politicians from Arc Manche authorities were again beginning to meet together during regular cross-Channel forums. This shows that cross-border co-operation is far from stable. Once cross-border institutions are set up, future participation is not guaranteed and very much depends on the active engagement of the various partners, who will engage, then disengage, then later re-engage again.

This cycle of engagement, disengagement and then re-engagement can be explained by the strategic approach sub-national authorities took to taking advantage of the opportunities offered by cross-border co-operation. While the Arc Manche sought to offer a number of benefits, the sub-national authorities involved were most interested in its potential to influence the allocation of EU structural and investment funds and the design on cohesion policy programmes in the English Channel region, especially Interreg. It is no coincidence, therefore, that periods of re-engagement with the network broadly match periods of time when EU regional policy programmes were under development.

Another trend witnessed through the latter half of the 1990s and into the 2000s is where wider inter-regional and transnational links were emphasized over cross-border ones. On the one hand is a move to pursue wider transnational bilateral links, and not to simply confine them to cross-border neighbours. This has led sub-national authorities in the English Channel region to pursue bilateral agreements with localities in eastern and central Europe. For example, Kent has partnered with the Hungarian county of Bács-Kiskun, while Bretagne has developed a link with Wielkopolska in Poland. More ambitious global links beyond Europe can also be observed; Kent County Council has established a bilateral partnership with the US state of Virginia, for example²⁷. As a result, the cross-border bilateral links developed from the late 1980s and during the 1990s have become less active as partners’ attention is diverted elsewhere. Again, this shift in attention can be explained by sub-national authorities taking advantage of the opportunities presented to them. For example, there was a perception among the authorities in the English Channel region that as central and eastern European countries became members of the EU, then eligibility for EU regional policy programmes would target these countries, and that if English and French authorities wanted to continue accessing EU funds, collaboration with central and eastern European sub-national government was essential.

Another trend during the 2000s saw a move to participate in European-wide multilateral transnational networks, again not necessarily confined to a cross-border remit. Some, such as the Assembly of European Regions, act as large peak associations for local and regional government. The vast majority, however, represent thematic policy interests. Examples of such networks include the Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions (CPMR), Eurocities, the European Regions Research and Innovation network (ERRIN)

²³ Peter Thomas, ‘Images and Economic Development in the Cross-Channel Euroregion’, *Geography*, 91, 2006, p. 14. Kent County Council, *International Affairs Group Update* (2010), available online at: <<http://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIid=158&MID=2994>>.

²⁴ Andrew Church and Peter Reid, ‘Cross-Border Co-Operation, Institutionalization and Political Space across the English Channel’, *Regional Studies*, 33, 1999, p. 649.

²⁵ Arc Manche, *Arc Manche Declaration* (2003), retrieved through personal communication.

²⁶ <http://arcmanche.com/en/>

²⁷ Rebecca Casson and Paolo Dardanelli, ‘Local Government Paradiplomacy in the UK: the Case of the Kent–Virginia Project’, *Local Government Studies*, 38, 2012.

and the Network of European Regions for a Sustainable and Competitive Tourism (NECSTouR). These networks have become an increasingly prevalent and influential in EU politics due to the relatively open nature of the EU policy process, which provides access opportunities for organized interests, including sub-national government²⁸. Indeed, almost all of the upper-tier sub-national authorities in the English Channel region are members of such networks²⁹. Again, sub-national authorities are seen to be taking advantage of the opportunities they are presented with.

The picture painted during the 1990s and 2000s is one of inconsistency and flux. Attempts to build cross-border co-operation have been made, and at times have been successful. But these examples have not remained stable as sub-national authorities engage and disengage over time according to their preferences and taking advantage of opportunities elsewhere. Rather than cross-border institutions providing a basis for stable and continuous co-operation, they provide a flexible option for sub-national authorities who wish to participate in cross-border co-operation, but might not want to commit long-term.

DEVELOPING SUCCESSFUL CROSS-BORDER GOVERNANCE: THE EMDI AND CAMIS PROJECTS

Despite the seemingly unstable and inconsistent approaches to cross-border co-operation in the English Channel region, a number of functional and transnational policy problems continue to exist. These include maritime safety in the world's busiest seaway, environmental and coastal erosion issues, the impact of climate change, tourism and the management of fisheries, among many others³⁰. This transnational policy context cannot be addressed by single sub-national authorities acting alone, and has thus provided the impetus for attempts to build a form of cross-border governance. Two cross-border projects have sought to address this concern: the Espace Manche Development Initiative (EMDI) and Channel Arc Manche Integrated Strategy project (CAMIS). These projects were started under the auspices of the Arc Manche network and secured funding from Interreg programmes. While partly funded by the EU, the role of the Arc Manche in setting up these projects confirms the bottom-up nature of these initiatives.

The EMDI project acknowledged the shared policy challenges faced by sub-national authorities along the Channel coast. However, it also recognized that existing attempts to build cross-border co-operation, coupled with the several cross-border projects undertaken as part of the Interreg programme, had not been able to provide a stable and coherent response to this policy context. It was also recognized that because of this incoherence, the specificities of the English Channel region were being neglected in national and European decision making³¹. The main output from the EMDI project would therefore be an in depth policy analysis of the English Channel region which would serve as a common information tool for all sub-national authorities in the area. Attempts to develop a common 'cross-Channel atlas' had been underway since the mid-1990s³², and the EMDI project built on this. This resulted in Buléon and Shurmer-Smith's publication: *Channel Spaces: A World within Europe*³³. This was supplemented with an associated website where the data could be, and indeed still is, kept up to date³⁴.

The policy analysis and the maps produced as part of this project are significant for two reasons. Firstly, by aggregating data from both England and France and presenting it in a single document or on a single map, the shared nature of policy challenges is highlighted. In effect the English Channel is conceptualized as a single policy area. The policy challenges present in this region are faced by all sub-national authorities along the coast, regardless of which side of the national border they are. Secondly, on many of the maps

²⁸ Hubert Heinelt and Stefan Niederhafner, 'Cities and Organized Interest Intermediation in the EU Multi-Level System', *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 15, 2008.

²⁹ Christopher Huggins, 'Motivations Behind Local Government Transnational Networking', *Regional Insights*, 4, 2013.

³⁰ Espace Manche Development Initiative, *A Strategic Vision for the Channel Area* (2006), available online at <http://www.emdi.certic.unicaen.fr/en/documents/strategic_vision.html>.

³¹ Espace Manche Development Initiative, *A Strategic Vision for the Channel Area* (2006), available online at <http://www.emdi.certic.unicaen.fr/en/documents/strategic_vision.html>.

³² Pascal Buléon, 'Atlas Transmanche / Cross Channel Atlas: Une Collaboration Franco-Britannique née à Caen et à Portsmouth', *Noroi*, 169, 1996.

³³ Pascal Buléon and Louis Shurmer-Smith (eds.), *Espace Manche: Un Monde en Europe / Channel Spaces: A World Within Europe*, (Université de Caen Basse-Normandie, 2008). See also Frédérique Turbout, *Focusing on the Channel: Collection of Maps*, (Université de Caen Basse-Normandie, 2013).

³⁴ <http://atlas-transmanche.certic.unicaen.fr/>

presented the administrative barrier between England and France (which would normally be clearly demarcated by a line) is absent. In this way the challenges of the English Channel region are presented in largely functional and geographical terms, something which cross-border co-operation could alleviate (see Figures 2 and 3).

<FIGURES 2 AND 3 ABOUT HERE>

The CAMIS project sought to use the information and analysis gathered as part of the EMDI project as a basis for identifying the key policy challenges in the English Channel region and how they could be addressed through cross-border co-operation. Like some of the initiatives described above, CAMIS sought to structure and institutionalize cross-border co-operation between sub-national authorities (and a range of other actors) in the English Channel region through a number of regular ‘cross-Channel forums’ and strategy development working groups. These initiatives fed into the development of an overall strategic vision for maritime policy in the English Channel. This strategy, along with associated documentation, commits sub-national actors to undertake a joint action plan with specific tasks and measureable outcomes³⁵. While CAMIS largely focused on producing a strategic vision (itself an attempt to develop some form of cross-border governance) a number of more tangible outcomes have also been realized from co-operation through the project. One such example is the recent Fécamp declaration on maritime safety³⁶.

Both the EMDI and CAMIS projects, therefore, represent a cross-border response to what is perceived as a set of functional cross-border policy problems. By conceptualizing the English Channel as a single policy space and using this as the basis for a common strategy and action plan, a form of cross-border governance is being developed.

LIMITS TO CROSS-BORDER CO-OPERATION? THE CASE OF MIGRATION

The gradual, albeit erratic, development of links and networks since the late 1980s, along with examples such as the EMDI and CAMIS projects, illustrate how cross-border co-operation has developed in the English Channel region. However, other examples stress limits to what can be achieved. This is particularly marked with the case of migration. The long-standing presence of migrants based in Calais attempting to reach the UK has been a matter of contention for national and sub-national governments alike. However, the issue has been exacerbated by the recent migration crisis affecting the whole of Europe, which has seen the numbers of migrants based in Calais and attempting to cross the Channel increase.

As with many of the policy issues identified by the EMDI and CAMIS projects, migration has a significant impact on the local level, especially so in border regions. It puts pressures on and affects the delivery of local public services and impacts local communities. It also affects local political dynamics. Populist parties such as the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) or the Front National (FN) have made strong local electoral gains in southern England and northern France by capitalizing on local voters’ perceptions of immigration. Given the transnational nature of migration as a policy issue, individual sub-national authorities are not able to address the challenges it raises alone. Cross-border co-operation therefore represents one possible solution.

However, cross-border co-operation on migration has been virtually non-existent between sub-national authorities along the English Channel. The main cause of this is that migration has become a security issue for many European states. This ‘securitization’ of migration has meant it has moved from the ‘low politics’ of public service provision, dealt with by sub-national authorities, to the ‘high politics’ of national immigration and security policy, dealt with at the national level. Indeed, the French and British governments’ response to has been to increase security at the border. This has primarily been through the

³⁵ Channel Arc Manche Integration Strategy, *Integrated Maritime Strategy for the Channel Region: A Plan for Action* (2013), available online at: <http://camis.arcmanche.eu/stock/files/user4/13_247_Camis_doc_strategie_maritime_UK_BD_1.pdf>.

³⁶ Channel Arc Manche Integration Strategy, *Déclaration d’Intention des Collectivités Littorales de la Manche sur les Risques d’Accident et de Pollution Maritime / Declaration of Intent of the English Channel Local and Regional Government Organizations on Shipping Incidents and Maritime Pollution* (2013), available online at: <<http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/CAE62676-74B9-4F77-AB12-74C5270B0717/33317/Item8ChannelShipping.pdf>>.

erection of fencing around the port of Calais and the nearby Coquelles rail terminal, and additional resources for policing. Rather than alleviate the presence of the geographical barriers described above, these measures serve to reinforce the presence of the border across the English Channel.

The role of national governments here means that, despite the impact migration has on the local level, sub-national authorities perceive it to be a national policy issue, rather than a local one. This is illustrated in the rhetoric of local political leaders. The mayor of Calais, Natacha Bouchart, for example has blamed the situation on the UK's immigration policy³⁷. Meanwhile the leader of Kent County Council, Paul Carter, cites a lack of resources from the UK government as the reason they are unable to adequately address the issue³⁸. In all cases migration is problematized by sub-national authorities as a national level issue rather than a local one. This leads sub-national authorities to shift responsibility for addressing the challenges of migration to national governments, rather than co-operating with each other.

CONCLUSIONS: FUNCTIONAL AND PRAGMATIC CROSS-BORDER CO-OPERATION IN THE ENGLISH CHANNEL REGION

This chapter has reviewed the case of cross-border co-operation across the English Channel. As a border region it faces a number of unique challenges; a wide geographical barrier, along with stark differences in working practices, bureaucratic culture, administrative structures and language all exacerbate the frontier effect caused by the national border in this region.

Despite these challenges, however, cross-border co-operation has taken place. From the late 1980s and through the 1990s a number of links were developed by sub-national authorities on either side of the border. Over time this co-operation has evolved from simple bilateral relationships to wider multilateral networking. Attempts have also been made to institutionalize this co-operation. The cases of the EMDI and CAMIS projects show that cross-border co-operation has been successful in addressing some of the transnational and functional policy problems presented to sub-national authorities in this region. However, the development of cross-border co-operation has not been a smooth, incremental process. Rather it has been sporadic and marked by instability. This was illustrated with the case of the Arc Manche network. In other cases cross-border co-operation has failed to develop. This was illustrated with the case of the recent migration situation in Calais.

Three conclusions can be drawn from this account of cross-border co-operation across the English Channel. Firstly, cross-border co-operation broadly represents a bottom-up venture of sub-national government in the English Channel region. The initial bilateral links were developed directly between sub-national authorities. It was these partnerships of sub-national authorities which led to the development of multilateral forms of cross-border co-operation, such as the Transmanche Euroregion or the Arc Manche. While successive Interreg programmes have provided some top-down impetus, many cases of cross-border co-operation pre-date this and most Interreg-funded projects built upon pre-existing cross-border networks. Other than the limited role played by Interreg, top-down drivers for cross-border co-operation appear to be limited. Indeed, part of the rationalization behind the EMDI and CAMIS projects was that the national and European levels have neglected the cross-border issues in the English Channel region, so the sub-national level has had to step in to address them themselves³⁹.

Secondly, cross-border co-operation appears to be framed in rational or pragmatic terms by sub-national actors in the English Channel region. The policy analysis produced during the EMDI project illustrates this by conceptualizing the English Channel as a single policy space with inherent functional policy challenges shared by all sub-national authorities along the coast. The CAMIS project, and associated development of cross-border governance and strategy, is presented as a functional response to this cross-border context. This pragmatic approach seems to account for the fact co-operation has occurred despite the inherent differences between England and France, and indeed the often radically opposing ideologies of the political

³⁷ Kent Online, *Calais mayor Natacha Bouchart tells MPs that migrants see life in UK as easy* (2015), available online at: <<http://www.kentonline.co.uk/kent/news/the-mayor-of-calais-threatens-42877/>>.

³⁸ BBC News, *Calais migrant crisis: UK police and social services plead for help* (2015), available online at: <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-33722604>>.

³⁹ Espace Manche Development Initiative, *A Strategic Vision for the Channel Area* (2006), available online at <http://www.emdi.certic.unicaen.fr/en/documents/strategic_vision.html>.

leaders involved⁴⁰. This also accounts for some of the instability witnessed in cross-border co-operation in this region; sub-national authorities engage and disengage according to their interests, the opportunities they are presented with and the perceived value cross-border engagement will bring. In this sense the institutions of cross-border co-operation in the English Channel region which have been created since the 1990s do not lock sub-national authorities together, but rather provide flexible structures for them to engage, disengage and re-engage with as their priorities, the context in which they are formed, and the opportunities they present dictate.

Finally, cross-border co-operation flourishes in areas of functional ‘low politics’, where sub-national authorities are able to lead it, and stalls in areas of ‘high politics’ which are led by national governments. As noted above, this accounts for the inherently bottom-up nature of cross-border co-operation witnessed in the EMDI and CAMIS projects, particularly as cross-border co-operation can address policy problems neglected by other levels of government. This was most marked, however, in the case of migration. Here national governments took the lead. This meant the role of sub-national authorities, and consequently opportunities for bottom-up cross-border co-operation, was constrained. Indeed despite the impact of migration on the local level, sub-national authorities’ involvement has been limited to shifting responsibility for the issue to the national level.

Overall, cross-border co-operation represents part of a wider trend of paradiplomacy, and in Europe in particular, has become increasingly prevalent. Sub-national authorities in the English Channel region have been part of this process, despite some of the structural challenges they face. Nevertheless, the evidence from this region shows that there are limits. Cross-border co-operation has flourished where sub-national authorities have been able to capitalize on opportunities to address functional policy challenges, but prospects for collaboration are small when policy issues become embroiled in ‘high politics’ at the national level. Continued cross-border co-operation therefore depends on the sub-national authorities involved. It is their ability to lead and their willingness to take advantage of the opportunities offered to them which ensures the continued success of cross-border co-operation.

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⁴⁰ Stephen Barber, ‘International, Local and Regional Government Alliances’, *Public Money and Management*, 17, 1997, p. 20. Andrew Church and Peter Reid, ‘Urban Power, International Networks and Competition: The Example of Cross-Border Cooperation’, *Urban Studies*, 33, 1996, p. 1305.

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Figure 1: Co-operation accords signed between sub-national authorities along the English Channel (source: Cross Channel Atlas).

Figure 2: Example of English Channel conceptualized as a single policy space (source: Cross Channel Atlas).

Figure 3: Example of English Channel conceptualized as a single policy space (source: Cross Channel Atlas).